MORTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Kyle L. Kirchmeier, Sheriff

News Release
For Immediate Release
October 26, 2016
Contact: Morton County PIO (701) 426-1587 or (701) 595-3596

Morton County Completes Investigation of Dog Handlers

Mandan, N.D. – Morton County has concluded the investigation it launched examining the appropriate licensure of private security guards used on a Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) construction site. In his report (which is attached) Morton County Captain Jay Gruebele said, "Through this investigation it has become evident that many security companies have been hired to do security work for the DAPL pipeline project. Although lists of security employees have been provided, there is no way of confirming whether the list is accurate or if names have been purposely withheld. Many of the initial security officers have come and gone and there is no way to prove who was doing security work. Through this investigation it has been proven that the dog handlers were not properly licensed to do security work in the State of North Dakota."

The investigation revealed there were seven dogs and seven dog handlers at the construction site September 3rd. During the investigation, Gruebele was told there were no intentions of using the dogs or handlers for security work. However, because of the protest events, the dogs were deployed as a method of trying to keep the protesters under control.

When Morton County launched the investigation authorities requested individuals with information or reports of bite injuries to contact the Morton County Sheriff's Department. No information was received.

205 First Avenue NW Mandan, ND 58554
Phone (701) 667-3330 Fax (701) 667-3463
Corrections Phone (701) 667-3318 Fax (701) 667-3216

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The Morton County report has been forwarded to the Morton County States Attorney's Office and the ND Private Investigators and Security Board for possible charges.

The investigation also included an evaluation of the area along the pipeline easement that tribal representatives have claimed to contain significant sites. Morton County is in concurrence with the ND State Archeologist's findings that their inspection "yielded no evidence of human remains or significant sites" along the DAPL construction corridor. As part of this investigation, Morton County coordinated three separate walk-throughs of the area in question were conducted with State archeologists, tribal historic preservation officers and others.

A copy of the summary of Cpt. Gruebele's report and the state archeological report are attached in this email.

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